THE

KENRICKAD.

[Price 1s.]

840. l. 34.
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THE KENRICKAD:

A POEM.

Ariel Press
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LONDON:
Printed for W. GRIFFIN, in Catharine-Street, Strand.

MDCCLXXII.

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THE

KENRICKAD.

IMMORTAL Pope! before thy ſhrine
Lowly I bend——all praiſe be thine:
Pure, and like flakes of feather'd ſnow,
Thy numbers, ſoft, mellifl'ous flow;
Enthuſiaſt grown, I joy to tell,
Like ſnow, they melted as they fell.

Aſpiring to the ſummits height,
On eagle wings I take my flight;
Oh! may no baneful influence ſhed,
Rays unpropitious o'er my head!
No ſecond Dennis——critic dire!
My ſpirit rouſe to vengeful ire;

And, from the pinnacle of bliſs,
Plunge me, at once, in dark abyſs!
Not vers'd in academic lore,
Tho' apt o'er authors good to pore,
I ne'er can lard a plain narration,
With tedious, languid, imitation
Of ſome of thoſe enlighten'd ſages,
Who bore the ſway in former ages.
Content my mother tongue to ſpeak,
I envy Homer not his Greek:
Virgil, great bard, and Horace too,
Who ſonnets for Mæcenas drew,
Their well-turn'd periods would forego,
To be, like me——in *ſtatu quo*.

Poets, (the truth I muſt unravel)
On Pedibus are forc'd to travel;
They ſeldom dream of elevation,
Unleſs thro' means of Dedication;
From,
good my Lord,
your moſt devoted,
Many vile ſcribblers have been noted:
Should flatt'ry on the ſurface float,
They ſoon are bleſt with ſecond coat;
Diſſimulation, gloſs'd with art,
Supplies the place of honeſt heart;

Merit's neglected till we die;
Or elſe eclips'd by partial eye:
Wild, unadorn'd, my page you ſee;
No Patron I, nor Flatt'rer he.

Satiric ſtrains now fire my Muſe;
Nor ſhall my pen thoſe ſtrains abuſe:
My timid ſoul wou'd nobly ſpurn,
A grave bedeck'd with ſculptur'd urn,
If for my epitaph 'twere told,
I barter'd honeſty for gold.

Such bards there are, the likeneſs true;
You'll know 'em by this tranſient view:
'Tis a rough ſketch, at random made,
And ill diſpos'd the light and ſhade;
No tints from Raphael or Vandyke;
Our ſubject——is a living tyke.

Parnaſſian nymphs attend my ſtrains;
K------ I ſing; the pride of ſwains:
Forgive the muſe, that ſylph-like dares,
To interrupt his private cares;
My ſubſtance air, I ſecret glide,
And over him by day preſide;
Watchful, at all times, for his good,
As honeſt Sylphs and Sylphids ſhou'd;

His guardian ſpright, o'er bed of ſtraw,
Where he, great bard, does Slander draw:
In all nice points of honour vers'd,
Reſpectful, to his virtue, firſt
My court I pay; ſecure from blame
His Panegyriſt——merits fame.

It ſo fell out, that on a day
I took my flight——n'import which way:
Whether attended, or alone,
Shall not, by me, be ever ſhewn;
Nor is the diſtance, time, or place,
Material to the preſent caſe——
Suffice it, that I curious grew;
As travellers will ſometimes do:
The ſun his wonted courſe forſook,
Dark was the ſky, the ravens croak,
When chance, or elſe an evil ſtar,
(Which of the two I am not clear)
For ſhelter drove me to the ſpot,
Where I o'erheard a curious plot:
'Twixt whom you'll aſk?——But ſoft and fair——
The one was Envy——one Deſpair:
In me, it were abſurd and vain,
To imitate their congee ſtrain;
So truce be to all friendly greeting,
And to the purpoſe of their meeting.

But firſt, ye learn'd, ſome cauſe aſſign,
Why ſhrinks at mortal touch ſupine,
The plant that Senſitive we call;
When Man, the nobleſt work of all,
Man, with a god-like form impreſs'd,
Creation's Lord by all confeſs'd,
Doth hourly on his ſpecies prey,
And not the leaſt remorſe betray?

Envy had long in ſecret pin'd,
And, anxious to relieve her mind
Of each corroding, jealous care,
Sought for auxiliary——Deſpair:
Deſpair, alone, an ear wou'd lend,
And ſuck the poiſon from her friend:
Under that claſs a num'rous herd
Preſent themſelves; th' inſatiate bard,
In ſemblance of a reptile wit,
Her taſte, by fawning, lying, hit.

This matchleſs gem! a glorious prize!
Envy beheld with gorgon eyes:
To his devoirs ſhe anſwer made——
All men, muſt follow, Sir, their trade:
Your's is at preſent much in uſe;
Head Scavenger for rank Abuſe

I think you're ſtil'd—a venial ſin,
That ſpares nor virtue, ſex, nor kin;
Nought ever comes amiſs to you;
For itching palm—a very Jew:
But, as a ballance for your fault,
Peace may, on griping terms, be bought;
Throw in the ſcale ſome hundreds more,
You'll unſay all that went before.

Envy, thou'rt right, I'm full of gall,
There's nothing can my ſoul appall;
For ſtratagem, revenge, or worſe,
I'll do't——put money in my purſe:
Shew me the wretch devoid of ſhame,
O'ercharg'd with crimes unfit to name;
He ſhall, in worth, give place to no man——
We'll picture him——a very Roman:
It ſtands, on record, I am poor;
That vice your Ladyſhip may cure:
Of other ſins I take no keep,
But into Lethe plunge the heap.

That you ſhould ſtand th' ordeal fire,
Our buſ'neſs does not, Sir, require:
In me ill manners it might ſeem,
Not to acknowledge Vice ſupreme;

You,

You, in that ſphere, unrivall'd ſit,
And, Atlas like, ſupport a weight
Wou'd cruſh, to th' center, young beginners,
Not converſant with hackney'd ſinners:
The volume of your mind, I read,
And find you apt for ev'ry deed;
A man ſo woe-be-gone, that's certain,
Was he that drew Old Priam's curtain:
Much I miſtake, or, on my life,
You're Author of the Widow'd Wife?
More coveted by me, I trow,
Than richeſt mine of Mexico.

Yes, Madam, yes:——(but down my rage)
I'm the *firſt play-wright* of the age;
With ſentiment, invention, taſte,
I overflow——nay run to waſte:
Cumberland, Murphy, and ſuch fellows,
Deſerve, for their reward——the gallows:
They, like the fly on chariot wheel,
Strut and look big——"on what they ſteal;"
While dearth of ſterling ſenſe, *like mine*,
Makes Gall'ry, Pit, and Box, repine:
Shakeſpeare had merit, we allow;
But what is Shakeſpeare good for now?
Of wit refin'd, behold a ſample
In Falſtaff's Wedding, for example:

If dunce ſucceed to dunce, why not as juſt,
That Hal the Second reign like Hal the Firſt?

On Mount Olympus, Jupiter
No longer ſhall be Thunderer;
Juno in quiet ſhall ſit down,
Tho' ſpouſe gallant with half the town,
The Nile ſhall ceaſe to overflow,
And I my florid ſtile forego,
'Ere bard with bard in friendſhip live;
And to each other merit give:
On earth, in Heav'n, not more at odds,
Huſband and wife, or men and gods.

My friend, I credit all you ſay;
Experience proves it ev'ry day:
But to the point.——Thou know'ſt, of late,
We've borne, to merit, mortal hate;
Long has the favour of the town,
Deſervedly on Roscius ſhone:
He poliſh'd and reform'd the ſtage,
To ſuit, at once, a poliſh'd age;
Nor can e'en we this truth deny:
Shakeſpeare, in him, will never die.
We muſt eſſay to pique his pride;
Nor let his hours thus ſmoothly glide:

A happy

A happy thought it does beſeem,
To leſſen him in the world's eſteem:
I therefore ſome pretence would draw,
On him to fix a *laſting* flaw,
But am a-ground——nor know I where
To penetrate——his name's ſo fair.

You, in this bus'neſs more expert,
Who've ever practis'd flinging dirt,
Some tender ſtring may haply ſhake,
That will eternal diſcord make,
Your fame to raiſe, on ſolid ground,
His muſt receive a deadly wound:
What man of ſenſe his houſe wou'd build,
Upon the ſand, or marſhy field;
Who on the rock ſecure might ſleep,
And bid defiance to the deep?

Envy, I much approve your plan,
And will aſſiſt it all I can:
My ſoul abhors this Roſcius' name,
A bar that ſtands 'twixt me and fame:
Is he your man of honour nice?---
I'll deck him forth with ev'ry vice
That human nature can diſgrace;
Then make him wear---a ſpecious face:

Trajan ſhould Nero be at will;
Greater the hero, more my ſkill.
The fact is this, without diſguiſe,
He ſlights my works, and me defies;
Nor at my ſhrine will bow the knee,
Tho' clad in pomp of L. L. D.
Whilſt I, in chair of Juſtice ſit,
Sole umpire in the court of Wit,
Ne'er will I tamely bear the ſcorn,
Of any Roſcius yet was born.

There is, in being mad, they tell,
" Pleaſures that none but madmen feel;"
Or I ſhou'd joy to ſee him wear
Subſtantially---the chains of Lear:
Death is from pain a ſure releaſe;
'Tis there the wretched are at peace.
To fate *my* vengeance *here* I'll try,
And torture him *before* he die:
Detraction——oh! the glorious word,
Wounds deeper than a two-edg'd ſword!

A tale replete with ſland'rous lies,
My fertile brain ſhall ſtraight deviſe;
At ſight of which,
Thy cheek, unus'd to crimſon dye,
The cryſtal tear expell'd thine eye,

Shall, for a moment's ſpace return,
And Thou, like Niobe, be ſtone.
Nay, ſtart not——ſince there is on earth,
Of virtue, now, a total dearth;
With qualms of conſcience men diſpenſe,
As burdenſome to wit and ſenſe:
Conſcience——a word now obſolete,
Neglected if we chance to ſee't,
Of late, in form, expell'd the nation,
Uncertain whence its derivation.

One ſacred truth from me believe——
Thy confidence I'll ne'er deceive:
The laws I preach I practiſe too;
And recommend the ſame to you:
" Practice o'er precept does prevail;"
The proverb's true——tho' ſomewhat ſtale.

Sooner ſhall curs refuſe their bone,
Heat ſhall forſake the torrid zone,
Arabia's deſerts plenty yield,
Th' Atlantic grow a common field,
In Greenland, ſun eternal ſhine,
Than my fell ſoul to good incline.

The ground-work laid, they ſoon begin,
Reſolv'd to plunge thro' thick and thin;

Envy found paper, ink and pens;
The bard, we know, at's fingers ends
Kept Slander, ready cut and try'd——
Never before ſo miſapplied.——
But how to name this clod of earth,
This monſter of miſhapen birth!
Call it, quoth Envy, if you like,
Roſcius' Laments for Loſs of Nyke.——

Matters agreed, you'll gueſs, like me,
Theſe friends will part in amity:
Not ſo——a knotty point appears,
Sets 'em together by the ears:
In foro conſcientiæ, clear,
The law, to Envy, did appear,
That *ſhe*, who firſt the bus'neſs plann'd,
Should not return with empty hand:
Share of the profit, as her due,
She then demanded of the Jew;
He own'd the argument well laid,
It ſtruck----but could not him perſwade.

Profit!——why ſure the woman's mad!
No profit ſhall from me be had:
You're in *my* power, I'll let you know;
The profit, and materials too

I ſeize

I ſeize on——therefore, friend, no more;
Leſt I lampoon you o'er and o'er:
Proof poſitive, beyond a doubt,
To ſerve yourſelf, you found me out;
Preſumptive proof——no plot in view;
I'd liv'd in penury for you.

Leſs angry doth the lawyer wax,
When bill of coſts his clients tax;
The parſon's wrath is leſs recorded,
When of tithe-pig full oft defrauded;
Than Envy, when her ears were grated,
With what above has been related:
Have I for this---oh! wretch abſurd---
Thy talents to my own prefer'd!
For this a glorious plot advis'd;
To be thus cheated and deſpis'd!
Chang'd your hard cruſts for bread and butter;
So ſoon to ſtrut, like crow in gutter!
Be gone——eſtrange *thee*, wretched man,
Far as from Berſheba to Dan;
Nor longer dare to gull mankind,
With ſchemes of thy eccentric mind:
So great an epicure thou'rt grown,
(Tho' plenty from thy board is flown)
Five guineas, could'ſt thou beg, or borrow,
It were expended on the morrow,

To furniſh forth a ſumpt'ous treat,
Thyſelf to gorge with ſav'ry meat!
Nor wou'd thy luxury abſtain
From rare Tokay, or burnt Champaigne!
What tho' ſharp penury, diſeaſe,
Thy ſhatter'd carcaſe wait to ſeize;
This hour thou'lt live, the next——go nigh,
Like Job——to curſe thy God and die.
The managers (howe'er you prate)
Deſpiſe your works, at any rate;
Nor would vouchſafe to give 'em reading,
Tho' hungry creditors were pleading:
Oh! cou'd thoſe creditors, perdue,
Epicius at his meal but view;
Full well, I know, the glorious ſight,
Wou'd give them all keen appetite,
And ſend 'em home---for what?---A writ.——
That each of them might pick a bit.
The only true perpetual motion,
Of which thou e'er had'ſt any notion,
Was ſeeking fairly to get clear
Of Duns and Sheriff's Officer;
Doctors agree, to 'ſcape i' th' nick---
Is, *motio perpetua Specific.*---
Thoſe who in troubled waters fiſh,
May happen on a tainted diſh:

My-

My confidence you've ill repay'd;
But Envy ſeldom is diſmay'd:
Convinc'd that Time will point a way,
All obligations to repay;
Tho', for the preſent, 'tis agreed,
I've truſted to a broken reed.

Madam, your malice plain I ſee;
But learn this little hint of me——
"From brother's eye would'ſt pluck the beam,
"Clear, without mote, your own ſhould ſeem."

The bard, at ſummit of his glory,
Retir'd unto his attic ſtory;
Ambroſial odours fill'd the room,
Brandy and Porter (rare perfume!)
Were on the table, cloſe beſide him,
With which, alternately, he pli'd him.

Thus far I follow'd—then withdrew,
And told Minerva all I knew:
The Goddeſs to my tale gave heed,
The pros and cons impartial weigh'd;
Then back diſpatch'd me thro' the air,
With this Decree, in lines moſt fair:

"Imprimis

" Imprimis---ſince the facts are plain,
" Envy ſhall no indulgence gain;
" She, whoſe dire tongue lays never ſtill,
" A convict ſhall remain at will;
" And Fame, freſh laurel ſhall beſtow,
" To crown immortal Roſcius' brow.

" The bard---(a penance moſt uncouth),
" Shall be confin'd to ſpeaking truth:
" ---A milder ſentence, it were ſaid,
" To be debarr'd of daily bread.---

" While Shakeſpeare's never-dying fame,
" Sacred is held, as *Briton*'s name;
" While Virtue, Taſte, this iſle adorn---
" Bleſt iſle!---where Slander ſkulks forlorn;
" Where Genius, tho' of foreign ſtrain,
" Protection ſues, nor ſues in vain;
" Where, ſtill are found, the happy few,
" That pay to Cæſar, Cæſar's due:
" In clime, like this, the criticks fury,
" Shall bias neither Judge nor Jury.

Giv'n at our *Court*, with full conſent,
MINERVA GODDESS---PRESIDENT.

ARIEL.